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**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEADERS URGE STATE LAWMAKERS
TO RESTORE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING, REFORM HOUSING**

SACRAMENTO – Local elected leaders representing the six-county Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region met with state lawmakers yesterday, urging support for a variety of transportation, housing and other regional priorities. SCAG leaders advocated for restoring Prop 42 funds to address the transportation funding crisis; supporting Governor Schwarzenegger’s “GoCalifornia” package and other measures aimed at improving the state’s economic potential with goods movement; implementing changes to the state’s housing system to better address the lack of affordability and availability; and adopting better conversion technologies for improved waste management.

“The state is stalling in its ability to address the housing and transportation crisis. The time is right for changes and improvements that will improve our state’s quality of life and economic vitality potential,” said Toni Young, Port Hueneme city council member and SCAG president. “I feel encouraged coming out of our meetings that the legislature and the administration recognize and understand the dilemma we face.”

Key transportation infrastructure investments are needed to improve the state’s goods movement system or it may lose billions of dollars in future economic growth. SCAG leaders praised the governor’s plan to restore \$1.3 billion in gasoline sales tax revenues to transportation projects as a significant first step in alleviating the congestion and pollution that is hurting communities and hindering California’s economic potential.

The SCAG delegation also briefed legislators on the importance of goods movement to the region and state’s future. More than 40 percent of the nation’s trade volume uses Southern California’s ports, but the current transportation infrastructure required to deliver cargo is not adequate to handle anticipated trade growth without increasing traffic congestion, air pollution and other detrimental impacts on the local communities.

“In large part, Southern California’s economy is based on our ability to move goods. The state must support efforts to improve our transportation systems and infrastructure or our economy will come to a halt,” said Lee Ann Garcia, Grand Terrace city councilmember and chair of SCAG’s Transportation and Communications Committee. “If we don’t continue making the investments needed, not only will the regional economy suffer, but the state and national economies will take a hit as well. This goes beyond merely addressing traffic congestion.”

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SCAG leaders also urged lawmakers to identify solutions to the state's growing housing crisis. In Southern California alone, housing construction is not meeting current demands and falling well short of future needs, with the population expected to grow by at least six million in the next 25 years. Southern California Compass, SCAG's recently adopted growth vision for the region, provides local leaders with the tools needed for more comprehensive transportation and land use planning. SCAG leaders also pressed for reforms to the state Housing Element law to provide for an affordable, available housing supply while encouraging cooperation among state and local jurisdictions to meet future need.

"Reforming the state's CEQA and Housing Element processes would streamline our region's ability to implement more comprehensive housing policies that facilitate more balanced growth and are better coordinated with transportation improvements," stated Deborah Robertson, Rialto city councilmember and chair of SCAG's Community, Economic and Human Development Committee.

To reduce stress on Southern California's landfills, the delegation also urged support for legislation that would encourage the development of waste conversion technologies and allow cities and counties to receive diversion credit for developing conversion facilities.

The group met with a number of the state legislators and transportation leaders at the Capitol during their trip to Sacramento this week, including:

- Sen. Dick Ackerman
- Sen. Richard Alarcon
- Sen. Debra Bowen, Elections, Reapportionment & Constitutional Amendments chair
- Sen. Bob Dutton, Government Modernization, Efficiency & Accountability vice chair; Revenue & Taxation vice chair
- Sen. Tom McClintock, Transportation & Housing vice chair
- Sen. Bill Morrow, Veterans Affairs chair; Judiciary vice chair
- Assemblymember Karen Bass
- Assemblymember Joe Baca Jr.
- Assemblymember John Benoit, Insurance vice chair
- Assemblymember Ronald Calderon, Banking & Finance chair
- Assemblymember Judy Chu, Appropriations Committee chair
- Assemblymember Lynn Daucher, Aging & Long Term Care vice chair
- Assemblymember Bob Huff, Transportation vice chair
- Assemblymember Betty Karnette
- Assemblymember Dennis Mountjoy
- Assemblymember Pedro Nava
- Assemblymember Keith Richman
- Assemblymember Van Tran, Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials vice chair
- Staff, Sen. Don Perata
- Staff, Assemblymember Fabian Nunez
- Staff, Assemblymember Jerome Horton

For more information about SCAG's legislative program, please call Don Rhodes, Manager of Government Affairs at 213/236-1840.